



NEW ZEALAND

Mouthpiece

The Official Journal of the Brass Band Association of New Zealand

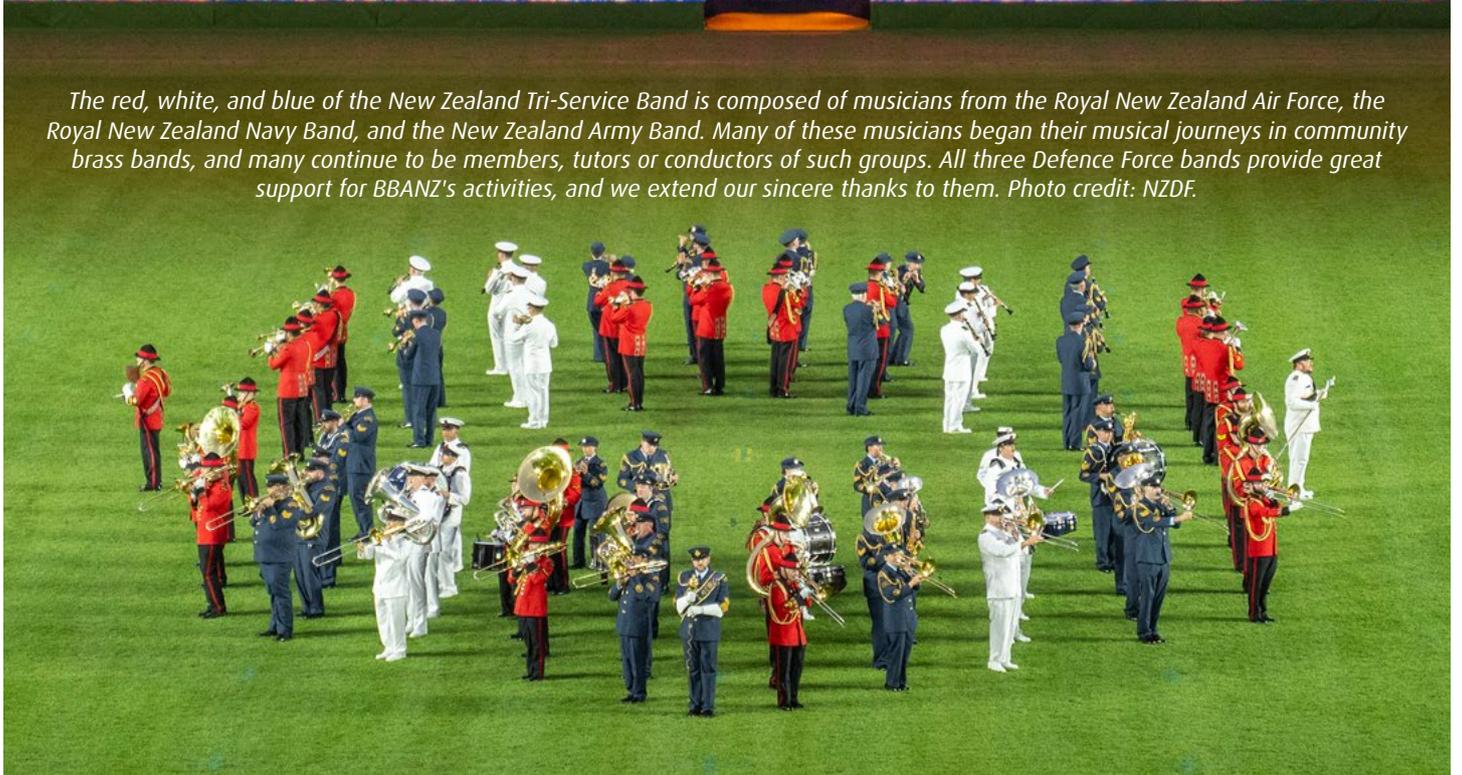
Volume 72 | Issue 2 March 2026 ISSN 2744-6298 (Online)

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The Royal Edinburgh Tattoo in Auckland



The red, white, and blue of the New Zealand Tri-Service Band is composed of musicians from the Royal New Zealand Air Force, the Royal New Zealand Navy Band, and the New Zealand Army Band. Many of these musicians began their musical journeys in community brass bands, and many continue to be members, tutors or conductors of such groups. All three Defence Force bands provide great support for BBANZ's activities, and we extend our sincere thanks to them. Photo credit: NZDF.





New Zealand
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Te Tira Pūoro
o Aotearoa

WELLINGTON
TE WHANGANUI-A-TARA
THU, 9 APR, 6:30PM
MICHAEL FOWLER CENTRE

AUCKLAND
TĀMAKI MAKĀURAU
FRI, 10 APR, 7:30PM
AUCKLAND TOWN HALL

RESONANCE

ANDRÉ DE RIDDER *Conductor*

André de Ridder appears with generous support from The Diessl Family.

JÖRGEN VAN RIJEN *Trombone*

RAVEL *Pavane pour une infante défunte*

ANDREW NORMAN *Slip*
Concerto for Trombone and Orchestra

SHOSTAKOVICH *Symphony No. 8*



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Positive Thinking

On a beautifully sunny weekend in mid-February, the BBANZ Board members sat in a windowless room in Wellington discussing and debating all things brass banding. A two-day meeting gives time to delve deeper into issues beyond just ticking them off an agenda.



An item not on the agenda but that prompted an in-depth discussion was: "Are we (the Association and bands) doing okay?" On the surface, things seem pretty positive. In April, we will have the largest number of bands attending a national contest since 1981; the number of bands registered with BBANZ continues to increase each year; the playing standards of our Youth and Secondary Schools' bands are amazing; and we are about to see the National Band in concert again. But is everyone okay? We won't know unless you tell us, and then we will try to offer specific help.

Of course, one of the biggest issues for all of us is funding. The 0% success rate for this year's Youth Band grant applications was very stressful for band manager Emily Richards. Still, she is a very competent

and resourceful person who secured a large donation from an anonymous donor to cover the shortfall. Amazing, and thank you.

So, how do we ensure ongoing funding for all our projects, without using up all the reserve funds we are fortunate to have built up? (No - I'm not going to mention Payroll Giving yet again.) The Board has now moved long-term, sustainable funding to the top of the agenda. This may be an aspirational goal, but if we don't focus on it, nothing will change.

Not long now until our National Championships. While a contest can be very busy and stressful, it is usually remembered afterwards as a time of catching up with old friends and listening to some amazing performances.

Wellington will host an estimated 1,500 competitors from 47 bands, including bands from Australia and Tonga. There will be performances from 40 bands, with five of them playing twice, as their Youth Grade bands will also be competing. Bravo to the conductors, managers and parents who can wrangle 25 kids into making great music and turning up to rehearsals.

It is very exciting to have so many bands competing; however, this, along with an International Music Festival attracting 20,000 people to the waterfront

on Friday afternoon, has created logistical challenges for the Street March event, which bands voted to return to Friday. Therefore, after much consideration, the Board has cancelled the Street March event for 2026. This change will avoid having the first bands in B and C Grades Sacred and Test on-stage before 8.30am, alleviate the pressure of having two grades rush through to make the start of the Street March and allow more time for the A and B Grades to pack their percussion into the Michael Fowler Centre. We do not make these decisions lightly, and rest assured, we examined all options, as we know many bands look forward to the Street March and will be very disappointed.

I wish all bands and players well in your preparation for Wellington 2026. May your bandroom be filled with happiness and beautiful music. I am looking forward to catching up with many of you in person in April.

Yours in banding.

John Sullivan - President
Brass Band Association of New Zealand

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Gig Guide

Saturday 14 March

Kumeū Vintage Brass performs at the 2026 Kumeū Show from 11.00am – 2.00pm. 35/41 Access Road, Gate 2/Main Gate, Kumeū.

Sunday 29 March

Addington Brass and Rolleston Brass are teaming up to present an exciting afternoon of music, featuring the major works the bands will perform at the National Brass Band Championships. 2:00pm at the Aldersgate Centre, 309 Durham Street North, Christchurch. Recommended Koha: \$10 Adults | \$5 Children

North Shore Brass Community Band in concert at Castor Bay Neighbours Day from 12 noon at Castor Bay Beach Reserve, 5/7 The Esplanade, Castor Bay, Auckland.

Tuesday 7 April (Change of date)

Free masterclass with Jörgen van Rijen, Principal Trombone of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, working with students from Te Kōki New Zealand School of Music, 5.30–7.30pm at the Adam Concert Room, Victoria University, Wellington.

This is a free event, but registration is required to secure your seat. Registrations will open 9 March and can be made via the [NZSO website](#)

Wednesday 8 to Saturday 11 April

Champion Brass 2026 – the New Zealand National Brass Band Championships in Wellington. Events at Te Whaea - NZ School of Drama and Dance, Wellington Opera House and the Michael Fowler Centre.

Wednesday

Events from 9.30am. Solos for Under 15, Juniors, Masters and Open Slow Melody. All percussion events. All Open ensemble and duets. Junior Champion of Champions from 5.00pm
Invitation Slow Melody from 8.00pm

Thursday

From 9.00am - Open solos and Junior Ensembles, Duets and Slow Melody. Open Champion of Champions from 7.30pm

Friday

From 9.00am, Sacred/Reflective item and Test Selection for A, B and C Grades. Youth Grade contest.

Saturday

From 9.00am, Own Choice selection for A, B and C Grades. D Grade contest.

Sunday 12 April

In Concert with the National Band of New Zealand and guest soloists. 2.00pm at the Wellington Opera House. Tickets available [HERE](#)

Saturday 25 April

Woolston Brass presents ANZAC, 2.00pm at The Piano, 156 Armagh Street, Christchurch. Tickets on sale now [HERE](#)

Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 June

Nelson, Marlborough West Coast Association band and solo contest.

Sunday 14 June

St Kilda Brass presents *Celebration of Youth*, with pianist Ozan Biner-McGrath. Trinity College Auditorium, Dunedin.

Sunday 5 July

"Pink Rhythm and Groove." Bras and Brass in concert with Marlborough District

Brass Band, 2.00pm at ASB Theatre, Marlborough. Tickets will be on sale soon from Eventfinda.

Sunday 19 July

"Pink Rhythm and Groove." Bras and Brass in concert with Hamilton Brass Band, 2.00pm at Playhouse Theatre, Gallagher Academy, Hamilton. Tickets will be on sale soon from Eventfinda.

Monday 20 July

Kumeū Vintage Brass playing at Morning Melodies, Bruce Mason Centre, Takapuna from 11.00am – 12.00pm.

Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 August

St Kilda Brass - 125th Celebration weekend. The band is celebrating this special anniversary with a variety of events, including a concert with Ian Porthouse, Musical Director of the UK's Tredegar Band. Contact St Kilda Brass secretary@stkildabrass.org.nz to register your interest.

Sunday 20 September

Auckland Bands Association band contest.

Saturday 26 and Sunday 27 September

Waikato Bay of Plenty District Association regional band and solo contest in Te Awamutu.

Canterbury Provincial Brass Band Association band and solo contest at McComb Performing Arts Centre at Cashmere High School, Christchurch.

Tuesday 29 September to Saturday 3 October

The 2026 National Secondary Schools' Brass Band training course in Christchurch.

To have your events listed in the Gig Guide and on the BBANZ Facebook page, email the editor at bbanzeo@gmail.com

Preparing for Performance

Towards the end of last December, Tauranga City Brass had the fun and privilege of hosting David Bremner to conduct a seminar on 'How to prepare for performances', which was basically about trying to get into the right headspace for contests and competitions. It wasn't aimed just at conductors but at all players in the band and designed to hopefully give them the ability to be able to play with confidence and purpose to get the result of achieving something cool.

It's not about winning (more easily said than done) but about achieving desired goals for the band. And as David pointed out, this may take a while, but ultimately the focus of

the band is to be content with their results, and those results may just be playing a piece well, having players perform together strongly, and achieving the band growing together.

Culture support within the band was a theme he highlighted. We should be there for each other and have a group mentality, thus making the band enjoyable and great to play with. Practise is important, and how you do it: it should be enjoyable and fulfilling. Insight into dealing with nerves was talked about, and how to breathe properly and focus.

As always in a talk like this, personal insight

was given with great stories about the bands he has been involved with and how challenges have been overcome.

It was a great afternoon, and munching on a scone with jam and cream, listening to David Bremner speak, was a great way to spend an afternoon. Once again, Tauranga City Brass would like to thank David for sharing his knowledge and wisdom with us.

David also presented seminars to Brass Whanganui, Deco Bay Brass, Hamilton City Brass and one very keen person from Rotorua Brass. Our thanks to the NZSO, who, along with BBANZ, funded and organised this education series.



Following last year's selection process, the National Band is excited to come together this month in Wellington to rehearse music for its upcoming performances.

In addition to rehearsals, time will be dedicated to creating a suite of promotional materials. Cameron Burnett from the NZ Army Band has planned and will film a promotional video, as well as photograph the band and individual players.

The band's first performance will be at the Gala Concert on Sunday after the national contest, where they will feature

Harmen Vanhoorne, Celine Wu, Helen and Glyn Williams, and the band's principal trombone Aishah Leitner. The band's concert will include *Paganini Variations*, *Kingdom Triumphant*, and many wonderful pieces showcasing this world-class band.

Don't miss this exciting concert at 2:00 PM on Sunday, April 12, at the Wellington Opera House. Tickets are available at <https://www.ticketmaster.co.nz/event/24006445CA2E384C>.

Plans are also in place for a series of Community Collaboration weekends

throughout the country. Musical director David Bremner stated, "This is an idea I had to bring the larger community together for concerts and workshops, and having the National Band at the centre of this is very exciting. Each weekend will be held at a different location and will include an educational component alongside performances. It's all about bringing musicians together and engaging with them through top-level teaching and playing."

The first of these collaboration weekends is scheduled for October.

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The Big Bang

During the last week of January, we at St Kilda Brass were delighted to host Eric Renick, Principal Percussionist of the Auckland Philharmonia, in our Dunedin band room. We welcomed thirteen enthusiastic percussionists from across the Otago and Southland region for an intensive skills workshop.

The day kicked off on a roll with sticks of all shapes and sizes flying as participants got to grips with a wide range of percussion techniques, from refined stick control to the coordination of hands and feet required for more intricate rhythms. The atmosphere was energetic and encouraging, and everyone had a truly bang-up time—leaving with new skills, fresh ideas, and, most importantly, a lot of enjoyment. We're already looking forward to the opportunity to host more workshops like this in the future.

We are extremely grateful to the BBANZ Charitable Trust for the financial support that made this workshop a smashing success. A special thank you also goes to St Kilda Brass percussionist Ella George for organising the workshop, and of course to Eric for his inspiring and enthusiastic teaching.

In other news from the South, after two successful years of Dunedin Youth Brass, we've decided it's time to think bigger and go regional. In 2026, we're excited to invite musicians from across the Otago and Southland region under the age of 25 to take part in the newly rebranded Southern Youth Brass.

Follow us on Instagram and TikTok @southernyouthbrassnz to stay up to date.

Quan Tay, St Kilda Brass



Eric demonstrating snare drum techniques to Zane Lehr.



When not playing eupho, Harry Smith gives the tam-tam a go.

ST. KILDA BRASS BAND
CHAMPIONS BRASS

CHAMPIONSHIPS	NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP WINNERS	CONDUCTORS	NAT. BAND MEMBERS	PRESIDENTS
1978	1978	1978	1978	1978
1979	1979	1979	1979	1979
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2019	2019	2019	2019	2019
2020	2020	2020	2020	2020
2021	2021	2021	2021	2021
2022	2022	2022	2022	2022
2023	2023	2023	2023	2023
2024	2024	2024	2024	2024

Attendees of the percussion workshop with Auckland Philharmonia, Eric Renick (front row, third from the right) and organised by Ella George (front row centre).



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NZ National Brass Band Championships 2026

8-11 April | Wellington

Contest preview

Once again our National Championships will have a Pacific feel, as bands from Australia and Tonga join 36 New Zealand bands in Wellington in April. Fun fact: with 36 bands plus soloists and ensembles from six other New Zealand bands, 70% of BBANZ registered bands are participating in this contest.

Before the intense competition gets underway, we have the opportunity to learn from an extraordinary international musician who is in Wellington to perform with the NZSO. Join us for a special masterclass with Jörgen van Rijen, Principal Trombone of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, working with students from Te Kōkī New Zealand School of Music on Tuesday 7 April, 5.30-7.30pm in the Adam Concert Room, at Victoria University.

This is a free event, but registration is required to secure your seat. Registrations will open approximately one month before the concert and can be made via the [NZSO website](https://www.brassbanned.com)

The championships then get underway on Wednesday, 8 April, with the Junior Solos and Open Ensembles. This is definitely the year of the percussionists, with 13 soloists plus three ensembles filling the Tawhiri Warehouse with five hours of 'rhythmic gymnastics'. Other highlights of the day will be the Junior Champion of Champions in the late afternoon and the Invitation Slow Melody later that evening. The performers in the Invitation Slow Melody are Kilian Casey (2025 Junior Champion of Champions), Mike Ford, Tyme Marsters, Luke Giri-Spence, Raynor Martin and Steven Booth, along with the winner and place-getter from the 2025 event, David Maas and Aishah Leitner, plus the New Zealand Champion of Champions, Keina Rollinson. One more spot is up for grabs in this prestigious event for the winner of the Open Slow Melody event earlier in the day.

The Open Solo and Junior Ensemble events start at 9.00am on Thursday, 9 April and conclude that evening with the Open Champion of Champions starting at 7.30pm. The ever-popular Junior Slow Melody has attracted only 43 entries this year. That is still a huge section for one adjudicator, so

we have split it and introduced an Under-15 Slow Melody section.

What can you and our chief adjudicators, Russell Gray, Glyn and Helen Williams, expect to hear in the band events? Performances in the A Grade Own Choice section feature some familiar works along with new works: *Vita Aeterna Variations* (Alexander Comitas), *Bipolar* (Stiji Aertgeerts), *Music of the Spheres* (Philip Sparke), *Tristan Encounters* (Martin Ellerby), *This World* (Thomas Doss) and two works by Bert Appermont, *A Brussels Requiem* and *A Gabrieli Fantasy*. Defending champions Wellington Brass, looking for an historic eighth win in a row, will have six local bands to contend with.

Last year's winners, St Kilda Brass, return to defend their title in the B Grade in a 10-strong field including newly promoted Levin and Districts Brass. The Own Choice music includes classics such as *Le roi d'Ys* (Édouard Lalo), *Connotations* (Edward Gregson) and *Tallis Variations* (Sparke).

And if you love the hymn *Be Thou My Vision*, arranged by Andrew Wainwright, you're in for a treat with four performances of it in the A and B Grades.

Ten bands will also contest the C Grade. With last year's winners now in the B Grade, the battle for glory may be between Canterbury bands Rolleston Brass and RSA Rangiora Club Band, the runners-up last year. The Own Choice section is a mix of old and new works, including *The Final Frontier* (Geert Jan Kroon), *Variations on 'Laudate Dominum'* (Edward Gregson) and two works by Thierry Deleruyelle, *Snow Island* and *Black Gold*.

For those of you who are concerned about the lack of Youth Grade Bands at recent contests, you will be delighted that five bands, including Tonga College, will perform this year. With players as young as nine and the majority of youth players also performing in their senior bands, it is a credit to the MDs and minders that so many bands are participating in this event. Your organisations are certainly future-proofing themselves.

Eight bands will compete in the D Grade contest on Saturday, performing the test



hymn *Elegy* by Fraser Bremner and an Own Choice and Stage March. New Brighton Silver Band are attending their first contest in the North Island to defend their title. We welcome new BBANZ band Lighthouse Brass to their first contest and welcome back Masterton Brass, Brass Whanganui - Concert Brass and Koru Brass Hamilton to the nationals after breaks of more than four years.

Admission is free to all band events on Friday and Saturday, allowing supporters, band members, and the general public to hear as many bands as possible. The championships will conclude on Sunday, with a gala concert featuring the National Band of New Zealand and guest soloists.

We are all looking forward to bringing you a great contest. Still, if you can't make it there, you can watch the events live at www.brassbanned.com, hosted by the inimitable and energetic Tim Kelly.

Helen Lee - Contest Administrator



Jörgen van Rijen

Brilliant Brass

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National Secondary Schools' Brass Band Course

We are delighted to announce the opening of the applications for the 2026 National Secondary Schools' Brass Band training course. Information about the course and the audition requirements can be found at [this link](#)

IMPORTANT DATES

3 May - Deadline for submitting applications - 5.00pm

Early June - Positions for the 2025 National Secondary Schools' Brass Band offered

29 Sep - 3 Oct - National Secondary Schools' Brass Band Course in Christchurch.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact the band manager, Malcolm Barr, at manager@nssbb.org

Application Criteria

- Players must attend a New Zealand secondary school or be attending an equivalent educational institution (area school, correspondence school, home school)
- You do not have to be a member of a BBANZ-affiliated brass band.
- Players should be playing at Grade 4 level or above



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National Secondary Schools' Brass Band

Musical Director: Linda Filimoeahala, Auckland
and Nic Scott, Christchurch
Course Manager: Malcolm Barr
manager@nssbb.org
M: 021 606 428

2026 National Contest in Wellington 8 to 11 April
Contact person Mike Sander
mike.sander@tpl.co.nz

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Full page	\$400	\$320

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If you would like to support the activities of the National Youth Brass Band please contact the **Executive Officer**.

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